



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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PROFILE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

The past three decades has seen an increased focus on women's health. This emerged from the historical concern with issues related to reproductive health, including family planning and maternal and child health, and broadened to include the much wider range of issues which affect women's health.

A National Women's Health Policy was launched by the Australian Government in 1989. One of its principles is that women's health policy must be based on accurate data. In response to this, the ABS released a publication entitled Women's Health, Australia. Subjects covered include health status, health actions, reproductive health, causes of death, life expectancy, violence against women, lifestyle (risk factors), preventative health, health of particular groups, medical work force, private health insurance and resources allocated to women's health.

Major findings of the report included the following:

- In 1989-90, females were more likely than males to report that they had experienced one or more recent conditions in the two weeks prior to being interviewed in the National Health Survey (75.4% compared with 66.2%).
- Women were less likely to smoke than males (24.7% compared with 32.1%) and the women who did smoke, on average, smoked fewer cigarettes per day and cigarettes of a lower tar content than men.
- Over 90 per cent of women aged 15 to 24 years were immunised against rubella in 1989-90.
- In 1989-90, women in older age groups, who are at a higher risk of developing cervical cancer, were less likely to have had a Pap smear within the last year than women in younger age groups.
- Almost one in four females (23.2%) consulted a doctor in the two weeks prior to being interviewed in the National Health Survey, compared with one in six males (16.8%).
- Women are waiting until they are older to have children and are having fewer children than in previous years.
- The majority of women who are victims of assault, sexual assault and rape do not report these crimes to the police.
- In the decade 1981-91, the percentage of graduating doctors who were female increased from 34 per cent to 42 per cent.
- Married females with dependent children were 2.5 times more likely to have private health insurance than females who were single mothers with dependent children (54.3%).

compared with 21.5%).

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